

# Pupil Transportation from DPI's Point of View

2014 WASB 66th Convention and Trade Show - Green Bay  
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# Agenda

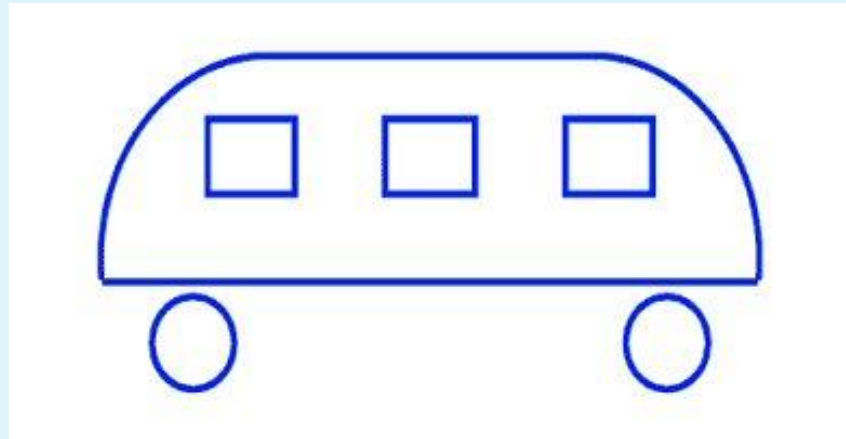
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- How exactly is the current pupil transportation aid calculated?
- What is the practical role of the transportation staff in documenting ridership for the school district?
- What are a few of the reoccurring factors that result in a audit finding?
- What is high cost transportation aid anyway?

# Exercise Your Brain – Visual Logic Brain Teaser by Caroline Latham

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- **In which direction is the bus pictured below traveling?**



- **The only possible answers are “left” or “right.”**
- **Do you know the answer?**

# Pupil Transportation Aid is based on:

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- Section 121.54(2), WI Statute, a pupil attending a public or private elementary or secondary school,
  - including four- and five-year-old kindergarten, is entitled to transportation by the public school district in which the pupil resides
  - if the pupil resides two or more miles from the nearest public school the pupil is entitled to attend.

# Pupil Transportation Aid is based on:

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- The appropriation for reimbursement of transporting public and nonpublic school pupils, **who are actually transported**, is found in s. 20.255(2)(cr), Wis. Stats.
- Distances are measured from the pupil's residence to the school attended, following the shortest commonly traveled route.
- School districts that furnish transportation to and from public and nonpublic schools are entitled to receive state aid at the following rates:

## Summer School Categories

Note that the rate for 15 or less days is 50% of the rate when Summer School goes over 15 days.

Summer School is the start of a new school year, regardless of when it starts.

Distance from Home to School	Period of Enrollment	Aid per Pupil effective 07-01-08
Over 2 thru 5 Miles	1-15 Days	\$2.00
Over 5 Miles	1-15 Days	\$3.00
Over 2 thru 5 Miles	Over 15 Days	\$4.00
Over 5 Miles	Over 15 Days	\$6.00

# Regular Transportation Aid Rates / Category

Category	Distance from Home to School	Period of Enrollment	Aid per Pupil effective 07-01-13
1	0-2 Miles (Hazardous Area Transportation) *	1-90 Days	\$7.50
2	Over 2 thru 5 Miles	1-90 Days	\$17.50
3	Over 5 thru 8 Miles	1-90 Days	\$27.50
4	Over 8 thru 12 Miles	1-90 Days	\$55.00
5	Over 12 Miles	1-90 Days	\$137.50
6	0-2 Miles (Hazardous Area Transportation)*	Over 90 Days	\$15.00
7	Over 2 thru 5 Miles	Over 90 Days	\$35.00
8	Over 5 thru 8 Miles	Over 90 Days	\$55.00
9	Over 8 thru 12 Miles	Over 90 Days	\$110.00
10	Over 12 Miles	Over 90 Days	\$275.00

# Regular Pupil Transportation Aid is based on:

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- Distances are measured from the pupil's residence to the school attended, following the shortest commonly traveled route.
- Half payment is made **for pupils enrolled and actually transported** less than 91 days (regular year) or less than 16 days (summer school).
- Pupil transportation aid for the current year is based on the number of children transported during the prior school year.



# Unusually Hazardous Transportation (UHT) Plan

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- Due to unusually hazardous conditions in certain areas, a school district may deem it necessary to provide transportation to some children residing less than two miles from their school.
- When such hazards reach a level of danger which is unacceptable to the community in which they exist and which cannot be corrected by other local units of government, a school board may develop a plan to designate such an area as unusually hazardous.

# Unusually Hazardous Transportation (UHT) Plan

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- A school district's UHT plan must include a map and explanation of the area to be designated.
- The sheriff of the county must be reviewed and supported in writing the UHT plan
- The Board and Sheriff's documents are sent to DPI for review.
- DPI has between 30 and 60 days to review the UHT plan.
- If the district's plan is approved; the district will receive up to \$15 in transportation aid for each pupil in the affected area, that rode at least one time.

# What does the school district's data tell us?

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2012-2013 Annual	2012-2013	Transportation
Fund 10 Costs for Transportation	Membership	Ridership
<b>348,931,107</b>	<b>856,211</b>	<b>520,340*</b>

- \* Ridership participation total includes:**
- Summer School (4 categories),
  - Vocational School (8 categories)
  - Regular School (10 Categories)

2013-2014 Regular Pupil Transportation Aid	20134-2014 High Cost Transportation Aid
<b>\$23,703,600 (6.8%)</b>	<b>\$5,000,000 (1.4%)</b>

**Percentage of Fund 10 Costs for Transportation**

# What is the practical role of the transportation staff in documenting ridership for the school district?

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- To count a student in the transportation report, the student must have ridden at least once from residence to school of attendance or the reverse.
- The transportation director knows who is assigned to each route.
- The driver(s) is the one who knows if a student actually rode during the year.

# What is the practical role of the transportation staff in documenting ridership for the school district?

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- There are many possible methods to collect this information, that is a local decision.
  - Clipboard with a roster of students that is checked regularly, signed/dated by the driver and collected by the transportation director to be keep on file.
  - Once a month, each of the four quarters, each semester? That is between the district and the transportation director.
- However, if the documentation is not signed and dated by the driver, will the auditor accept it as being accurate?

# What is the practical role of the transportation staff in documenting ridership for the school district?

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- If you remember, regular transportation aid is base not only on a student actually riding the bus...
- But also on the student's enrollment in the school district.
  - In most cases, the transportation director or bus driver may not know the number of days each student that rode the bus was enrolled.
  - That information comes from the school staff and the software system the use for student records.

# What are a few of the reoccurring factors that result in a audit finding?

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- School district pupil transportation data is audited a minimum of one time every three years.
- When the audit firm finds significant concerns, they will notify both the school district and DPI, indicating what concerns were found.
- The School Financial Service Team will then conduct a formal review.
  - There can be financial consequences to the district.

# What are a few of the reoccurring factors that result in a audit finding?

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- Between May 15, 2014 and June 27, 2014 each of the 424 WI School Districts are to report their student ridership for the 2013-2014 school year.
  - The report does not get done in a timely manner.
- The accuracy of each of these reports will be determined on by the cooperation between those who drive/manage pupil transportation and the school staff that maintain enrollment records.



# What are a few of the reoccurring factors that result in a audit finding?

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- Lack of documentation for the auditor to review.
- The school asks the parents for the distances from the pupil's residence to the school attended, following the shortest commonly traveled route.
  - No one checks the distance using MapQuest or Goggle Maps.
  - Someone rounded the distance up when it was almost to the next mileage category. (Slide 7)
    - ✦ 4.95 miles is round to 5.0 miles and to be moved into the next mileage category it must be over 5.0 miles.

# What are a few of the reoccurring factors that result in a audit finding?

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- School district has not updated their UHT plan in several years, even though development has taken place.
  - Resulting in several students not qualifying to counted in the pupil transportation report.
- Separate restricted bus routes for students based on their IEP and the related rules are supported by Special Education aid.
  - These students cannot be counted in the Regular Bus transportation report and the Special Education reports. (Double counted by the district.)

# Charging fees for pupil transportation

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- Sec. 121.54(8) prohibits a school board from charging pupils or their parents for transportation that the school district is required by law to provide.
- As allowed under WI Stat. 121.545(1) and 121.54(2)(c)
- Thus it is possible for a school district to charge a fee to transport student who live within two miles of school and not in Unusually Hazardous Transportation area.
- Example: In the Mount Horeb, students in grades 6-12 who live within two miles of the Middle School or High School and do not live within designated hazardous areas will only be allowed to ride the school bus to and from school by paying a bus ridership fee of \$200 per family.

# What is high cost transportation aid anyway?

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- WI Stat.121.59 *High cost transportation aid*
  - Provides \$5,000,000 GPR in a **new** appropriation in both FY14 and FY15.
  - This aid will **reimburse** school districts incurring ‘pupil transportation costs per member’ above 150 percent of the statewide average.
  - **If** the amount of the appropriation is **not sufficient** to pay all costs, **payments** to school districts **shall be prorated**.

# School Finance Services Team Contacts

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**Thank you for making the pupil transportation audit  
process for your district a success!**

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